

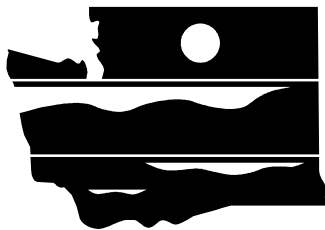
An Assessment of Watershed Planning



March 2003
Ecology Publication #03-06-009

An Assessment of Watershed Planning

Report to the Legislature

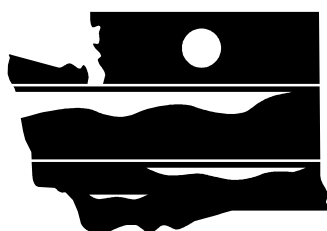


WASHINGTON STATE
DEPARTMENT OF
E C O L O G Y

**January 2003
Ecology Publication
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please contact Gale Blomstrom at (360) 407-6548 (voice) or (800) 833-6388 (TTY).*

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WATERSHED PLANNING ACT CHRONOLOGY

- ◆ In 1998, the Washington State Legislature passed the **Watershed Planning Act** (RCW 90.82), providing a framework for developing local solutions to water issues on a watershed basis. Framed around watersheds, or sub-watersheds known as Water Resource Inventory Areas (WRIAs), this voluntary, comprehensive planning process is designed to allow local citizens, governments and tribes to form watershed management Planning Units to develop watershed management plans. State agencies manage grants, provide technical assistance and, if requested, serve on the Planning Units. Ecology's primary repository of information on the Watershed Planning Act, including grant programs and links for each planning effort, is available at: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/watershed/index.html>
- ◆ Shortly after the 1998 Legislative Session, a group of five local government and special district associations initiated a process to develop a manual on watershed planning. Ecology provided funding for the manual, and several additional State agencies participated in its development. The ***Guide to Watershed Management and Planning (Draft)*** was published in January 1999. The manual presents the requirements of the Watershed Planning Act and a variety of suggestions for navigating the planning process. Although subsequent reprints have retained the "draft" designation, the guide has been utilized as a final document by Ecology, the five associations, and Planning Units throughout the State. For more information, visit: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/99106.html>
- ◆ In September of 1998, Ecology joined the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office and ten other state agencies and commissions in signing a Memorandum of Understanding to coordinate implementation of **Watershed Planning and Salmon Recovery**. This MOU continues to serve as a guiding document for clarifying roles and responsibilities, and fostering cooperative relationships. For more information, visit: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/watershed/MOU.html>
- ◆ In December of 1999, Ecology published a 12-page update, ***Implementing the Watershed Planning Act: Report for 2000***, on watershed planning activities accomplished during the preceding two years. The document outlines the financial and technical assistance provided by the agency, discusses issues raised by Planning Units, and details the progress of watershed planning efforts. For more information, visit: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/99123.html>
- ◆ The 2001 Legislative Session brought a number of significant changes to watershed planning. Under the **Water Resources Management Act** (ESHB 1832), Planning Units became eligible for new Phase Two funding. Planning Units can now apply for an additional \$300,000 per WRIA – \$100,000 for each of three assessment elements: instream flows, water quality, and multipurpose water storage opportunities or projects. Priority is given to proposals for setting or amending instream flows. Planning Units may also request different levels of funding for Phases Two and Three than that specified in law, so long as the total amount awarded does not exceed the maximum amount eligible for funding. Other watershed-related statutes added or modified by ESHB 1832 included flexible planning, water right processing, water conservancy boards, family farms, conservation incentives, and trust water rights. For more information, visit: http://www.leg.wa.gov/pub/billinfo/2001-02/House/1825-1849/1832-s_fbr_06072001.txt

WATERSHED PLANNING ACT CHRONOLOGY

- With passage of ESHB 1832, the Office of Financial Management was directed to complete an assessment of watershed planning, including an evaluation of the performance of Planning Units and state agencies involved in planning, by October 1, 2001. The result was an ***Assessment of Watershed Planning: Progress, State Agency Participation, and Instream Flow Setting***. The report found state agencies had provided \$12.9 million in grants, and \$5.7 million and 47.5 FTEs in technical assistance to watershed planning between July 1998 and June 2001. For more information, visit: <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/reports/watershed/watershed.pdf>
- Modifications to the Watershed Planning Act through ESHB 1832 and adoption of related legislation have directly affected watershed planning and various aspects of water law and water resource management. As a result of these changes, and the experiences of Planning Units throughout the state, a ***Guide to Watershed Management and Planning: Addendum #1*** was published in December 2001. The addendum focuses on three specific areas: recent developments to watershed planning, coordination with related planning activities, and strategies for managing water quantity. For more information, visit: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/0206005.html>
- Also passed in 2001, the **Watershed Health Monitoring & Assessment Act** (SSB 5637) established an interagency committee to provide a strategy and action plan to the Governor and appropriate legislative committees for achieving a comprehensive watershed-related monitoring program with a focus on salmon recovery. In conducting assessments or studies that include monitoring components or recommendations, Ecology and the watershed Planning Units must now seek to implement the committee's recommendations. The report observes that while Ecology has set instream flows at 110 locations, and is currently assisting local watersheds in establishing flow habitat requirements, there are numerous gaps in flow monitoring. They recommended flow studies for all the watersheds identified as water critical and expansion of continuous flow monitoring, but noted there currently is no dedicated funding for flow monitoring. For more information, visit: <http://www.iac.wa.gov/SalmonMonitoring.htm>
- The **2002 Supplemental Budget** (ESSB 6387) reduced grant support for watershed planning from \$11.1 million to \$8.2 million, and switched the funding source from the State General Fund to the Water Quality Account. Ecology was also authorized to seek \$900,000 from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board for the development of instream flow recommendations in WRIs where low flows limit salmon recovery. Based on audit findings guiding other grant programs, Ecology made the decision to provide grants to Planning Units on a cost-reimbursement basis effective FY2002. Because grants are no longer provided to recipients "up-front," the rate at which funds are disbursed to local jurisdictions has slowed considerably. For more information on current budget allocations, visit: http://www.leg.wa.gov/sl/6387-s_sl.pdf

WATERSHED PLANNING PROCESS

Phase One (Organization)

Initiating Governments (through a designated lead agency) may apply for an initial organizing grant of up to \$50,000 per WRIA, or \$75,000 for a multiple WRIA.

- ◆ Initiating Governments in a WRIA include all counties, the largest city, and the highest volume water supply utility.
- ◆ Initiating Governments identify and appoint Planning Unit members representing a wide range of water resource interests.
- ◆ The Planning Unit develops operating and decision-making structures and goals, and a detailed scope of work for Phase Two.

Phase Two (Technical Assessment)

Planning Units may then apply for up to \$200,000 per WRIA to fund watershed assessments. The assessments determine the availability of, and process for gathering data and technical information, and how it will be managed and accessed. This effort spans three levels: Putting Existing Data to Work (Level 1), Short-term Collection of New Data (Level 2), and Long-term Data Collection and Monitoring (Level 3). At a minimum, these assessments need to provide the following information:

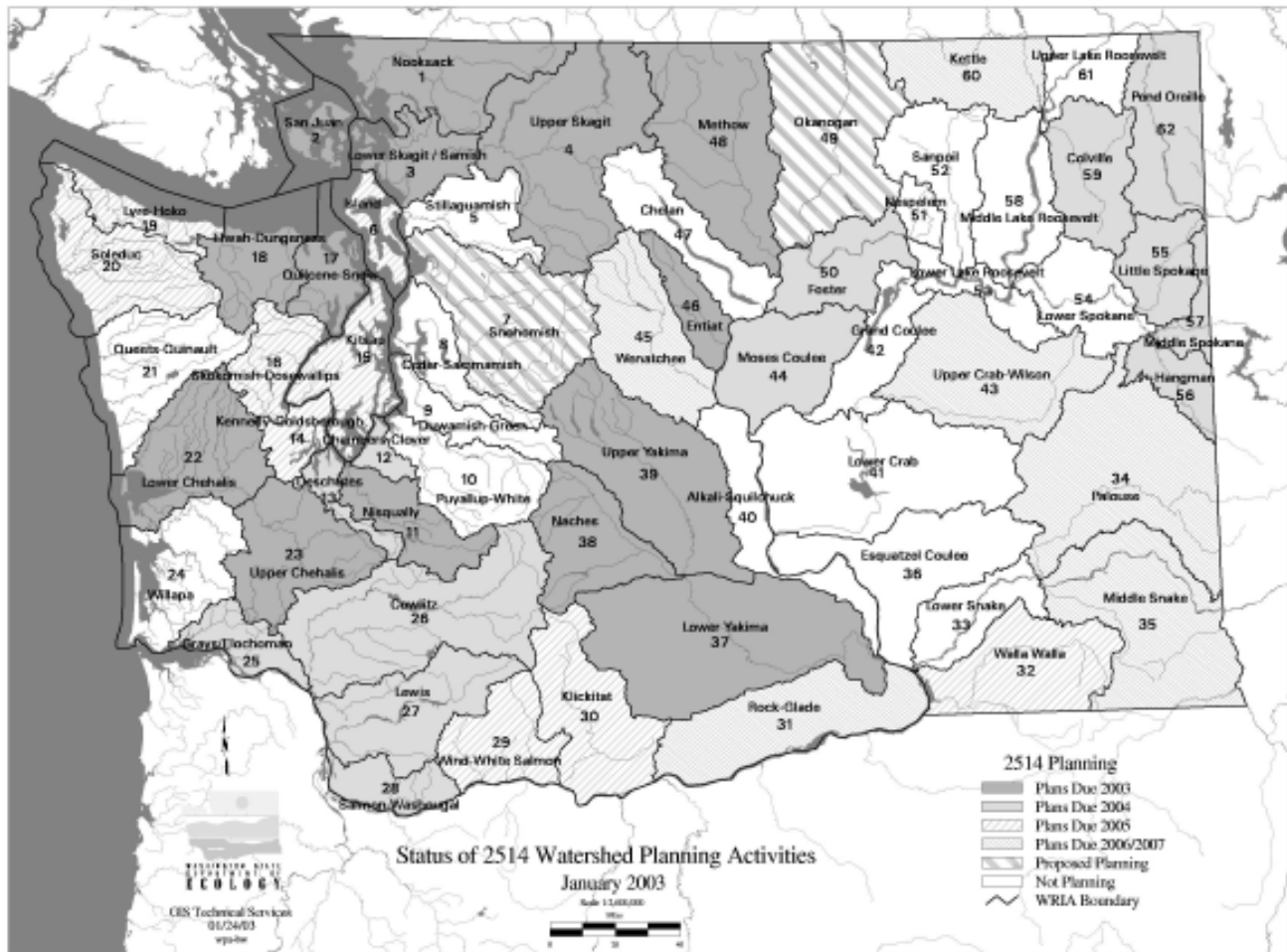
- ◆ Estimate of surface and ground water present, and its availability given seasonal fluctuations and other variations.
- ◆ Estimate of water represented by water rights claims registry, water use permits, certificated rights, existing minimum instream flow rules, federally reserved rights, and any other rights to water.
- ◆ Estimate of surface and ground water actually being used, and projected future needs.
- ◆ Identification of aquifers which recharge surface water, and surface areas which recharge aquifers.
- ◆ Estimate of the surface and ground water available for further appropriation, taking into account adopted minimum instream flows, including the data needed to evaluate flows necessary for fish.

The Planning Units also may choose to develop strategies for improving water quality, protecting or enhancing fish habitat and, in collaboration with the Department of Ecology, setting minimum instream flows. Subsequent legislation provided an additional \$300,000 per WRIA to address instream flow and water quality components, and undertake multipurpose water storage assessments, with priority given to instream flow work.

Phase Three (Plan Development & Approval)

Up to \$250,000 per WRIA may be allocated for the development of the Watershed Management Plan and making recommendations for actions by local, state, and federal agencies, tribes, private organizations and citizens. At a minimum, management plans must include strategies to supply adequate water to meet minimum instream flows for fish, and provide for future out-of-stream uses. A watershed plan, approved by the Planning Unit, must be submitted for county action within four years of the date the Planning Unit first draws upon Phase Two funding. Counties must conduct a public hearing and may approve or reject the plan, but may not amend it.

WATERSHED PLANNING STATUS



- At present, 42 of Washington's 62 WRIs are represented by 33 Planning Units engaged in watershed planning. Planning has been proposed for two additional WRIs – Snohomish and Okanogan – but Initiating Governments have yet to formally adopt the process.
- Three of the Planning Units – Rock/Glade, Palouse and Middle Snake – began Phase One during FY02. The scope of their planning and final management plans due dates have yet to be determined.
- Of the other 30 Planning Units, 20 have submitted Phase Two Level One assessments, either in final form or as a draft available for public review. Level One assessments by the other 10 Planning Units are still in various stages of development, with many expected to reach completion in the near future.
- One management plan has been completed under Phase Three (Yakima, Dec 2002). Twenty-three Planning Units are still developing plans, with many nearing completion. Six Planning Units working in Phase Two have yet to begin Phase Three. Ten final plans are due in 2003, 9 plans are due in 2004, 8 more plans are due in 2005, and 3 plans are scheduled for completion in 2006.

WATERSHED PLANNING STATUS

WATERSHED PLANNING GRANTS

- Between July 1998 and December 2002, Ecology awarded 62 grants totaling more than \$18 million to support 33 watershed Planning Units. Included were 26 supplemental grants to support water quality, water storage and instream flow-setting assessments funded by the 2001 Legislature. An additional 15 supplemental requests are under discussion.
- The current biennial budget allocates \$8.2 million for grants, including \$1.2 million targeted for supplemental assessments. Some \$200,000 of the grants budget was dedicated to facilitation support for the Central Puget Sound Water Initiative process. Authorized to retain up to 1% of awards for grants administration, the agency withheld \$140,000 between July 1998 and June 2003.

Central Puget Sound Water Initiative

This effort to develop a comprehensive regional water resource management strategy for Central Puget Sound is being developed by the Governor's office. The strategy provides a regional framework for coordinated State decision-making in cooperation with local governments, and with consultation and involvement by tribes and federal agencies. It provides policy guidance for cooperatively identifying and evaluating creative and adaptive means to manage water resources in the Cedar/Sammamish, Duwamish/Green and Puyallup/White watersheds on a long-term, sustainable basis. For more information, visit: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/CentralPugetSoundWI/cpswihome.html>

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Ecology received \$3,440,000 to provide technical assistance during the 2001-03 biennium:

- Twenty FTEs from Ecology for direct support of Planning Units, program coordination, and consideration of policy issues and scientific aspects of instream flows and hydrology (\$2,916,000).
- Three FTEs from WDFW and one FTE from DOH for technical assistance and support for plan development (\$524,000).

Interagency Coordination

The current biennium provides Ecology with funding for three FTEs from the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, and one FTE from the Washington Department of Health. These positions provide assistance and support for planning efforts, focusing on instream flow and habitat studies. This support is crucial given that ongoing watershed planning efforts encompass half of the 16 WRIAs where critically low flows limit fish survival.

Coordination is particularly important between Planning Units and Lead Entities working on salmon recovery under HB 2496. A recent survey found that 54% of participants in Lead Entity programs for critical flow watersheds considered communication between Planning Units and Lead Entities to be Very Good or Excellent. The survey noted coordination between the two groups will increase through Regional Recovery planning and watershed plan implementation efforts. For more information, visit: <http://www.wa.gov/wdfw/grants/leadlist.htm>

WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

An additional \$2,887,000 was allocated to Ecology for the 2001-03 biennium to support water management projects:

- ◆ Expand stream-flow monitoring in watersheds with critical flows (\$1,613,000)
- ◆ Set instream flows in six basins not currently engaged in watershed planning (\$600,000)
- ◆ Develop a template to streamline environmental review (\$374,000)
- ◆ Assist the Coordinated Resource Management model for watershed planning (\$200,000)
- ◆ Establish a panel to examine long-term funding options for plan implementation (\$100,000)

Stream-Flow Monitoring

Enhanced stream-flow gauging in the 16 watersheds where critically low flows limit fish survival has been a high agency priority. Funds provided by the Legislature were targeted for local staff support (\$500,000), equipment purchases (\$700,000) and agency technical assistance (\$400,000). As of December 2002, Ecology had provided funding to maintain 32 data collection points in four watersheds (Elwha/Dungeness, Quilcene/Snow, Nooksack and Walla Walla). A grant to install an additional 8 data collection points in the Middle Snake is pending. The agency was also able to secure funding through the BPA for 24 data collection points in the Wenatchee, Okanogan and Entiat watersheds. The gauges provide real-time data transmission accessible on Ecology's web site: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/apps/watersheds/flows/state.asp>

Flow-Setting for Additional Watersheds

Ecology hired additional staff to assist with instream flow work in six WRIs that, at the time, were not engaged in planning – Middle Snake, Walla Walla, Stillaguamish and the Central Puget Sound watersheds (Cedar/Sammamish, Duwamish/Green and Puyallup/White). Ecology has been informally assessing existing studies and local government interests, and deciding whether to proceed with reaffirming, amending or establishing flows. Middle Snake and Walla Walla have since begun watershed planning efforts. Staff are continuing to provide guidance on flow issues.

SEPA Environmental Review Template

Recognizing that all Planning Units will need to complete a similar analysis of water management strategies, Ecology is developing a statewide SEPA draft EIS that will address the four components of watershed planning (water quantity, instream flow, water quality and habitat) and possible management strategies, and provide a general analysis of the probable significant environmental impacts. This will help Planning Units make informed decisions regarding different approaches, and understand how a plan will create a framework for future on-the-ground activities. While the dEIS will not eliminate the local obligation to complete SEPA review, it will significantly reduce the work needed to meet SEPA requirements. It also will allow for faster and simpler SEPA compliance, which should assist in timely adoption and implementation of plans. It is anticipated the Draft EIS will be circulated in March 2003 for a 45-day public comment period. The Final EIS will be available in June 2003. The dEIS is available at: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/0306013.html>

WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

Coordinated Resource Management Support

Funding was provided to WSU Cooperative Extension to hire a statewide coordinator for the Coordinated Resource Management Task Group. CRM is a nationally recognized incentive and community-based collaborative process to address natural resource and land management problems. The coordinator will provide information and assistance to voluntary, consensus-based local groups, including watershed planning efforts, on how to form and operate collaborative processes and problem-solving efforts. For more information, visit: <http://wawater.wsu.edu/pages/crm.htm>

Preparing for Phase Four (Implementation)

Many Planning Units are concerned they will develop strategies and make difficult decisions concerning water resource management only to find the state has not identified the fund sources or solutions needed to implement the plans. In recognition of this concern, the Legislature directed Ecology to create, “a blue-ribbon panel to develop long-term watershed planning implementation funding options.”

The 16-member Watershed Plan Implementation Committee was established with representation from:

- ◆ Water Suppliers (PUD #1 of Whatcom County, Lakewood Water District, East Wenatchee Water District, Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District, Stevens County PUD #1, Dungeness Water Users Association),
- ◆ Local Governments (Klickitat County, Clark County, Clallam County, City of Walla Walla, Hood Canal Coordinating Council),
- ◆ Tribal Governments (Nisqually Tribe, Confederated Tribes & Bands of the Colville Nation),
- ◆ Business Interests (Washington Hops Association, Boeing Company), and
- ◆ Environmental Concerns (Trout Unlimited).

The committee recognized the importance of a thorough understanding of the implementation process, and perceived its charge to include:

- ◆ Inventorying activities that may be included in final watershed management plans, evaluating how much the plans may cost to implement, and identifying existing and potential sources of funding.
- ◆ Developing an understanding of the context for plan implementation, including relationships to existing water resource management programs and funding sources.
- ◆ Exploring approaches to coordination and oversight of implementation, and recommending how authority and responsibility for implementing and updating plans should be structured.

The committee met nine times over an eight-month period before issuing their draft report, *Phase 4 Watershed Plan Implementation Committee: Report to the Legislature*, for public review in October 2002. The report was then presented at a November 19th conference, *Washington's Water Future*, held in Tacoma with 250 attendees from around the state, including the Governor, key legislators, local elected officials, water managers and other key stakeholders. A summary of their findings and recommendations begins on page 10. The final committee report is available at: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/0206023.html>

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES

The 2001 Legislature allocated \$11.4 million to Ecology under the biennial Capital Budget for two programs associated with watershed planning:

- ◆ Acquire water rights in watersheds with critical flows (\$8 million).
- ◆ Water measuring grants in critical flow watersheds (\$3.4 million).

Water Acquisition Program

This voluntary program aims to increase flows in the 16 watersheds with vulnerable salmon and trout populations. The program enjoys strong support from local, state, federal and tribal governments and private entities. Using state and federal funds, program sponsors provide farmers, ranchers and other water right holders the opportunity to participate in salmon recovery by selling, leasing or donating their water. All water obtained through the program is returned to the streams and rivers where it originated. Program sponsors have developed criteria and guidance to ensure water rights are acquired at fair market value in areas that will most benefit fish. For more information, visit <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/instream-flows/wacq.html>

Water Measuring Grants

Ecology provides grants for water users to purchase water measuring devices in response to new measuring and reporting requirements. Priority is given to applicants in the 16 critical low flow watersheds. Other water right holders, particularly those participating in WDFW's Cooperative Compliance Program (a cost-share program for purchasing fish screens) or the state Irrigation Efficiencies Program, are also encouraged to apply. For more information, visit: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/sw/inst.html>

WATERSHED PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The Phase Four Watershed Plan Implementation Committee: Report to the Legislature - Dec. 2002, found considerable progress in planning since passage of the Watershed Planning Act. Among their key findings and recommendations:

Coordination & Oversight

Planning Units are shaping the future of their watersheds, yet there is considerable uncertainty over how plans will be implemented. Effective coordination and oversight of the implementation process will be critical to the success of watershed management, and must be locally designed to fit into the existing pattern of relationships and responsibilities.

- ◆ Planning Units and implementing organizations should consider developing detailed implementation plans within one year of watershed plan approval by county legislative authorities. To support this work, the Legislature should expand the current grant program to provide matching funds to support implementation coordination and oversight.
- ◆ Administrative options for ongoing coordination include Planning Units or lead agencies, individual organizations (either separately or jointly), or creation of new “Water Resource Districts.” Specific recommendations to the Legislature include:
 - Allowing Planning Units or successor groups to continue to operate after plan adoption.
 - Establishing “Implementing Governments” to accept obligations for implementation, including identification of “Implementation Lead Agencies” to coordinate and oversee the process.
 - Enabling local governments to establish Water Resource Districts. Key aspects would include formation by citizen vote, jurisdictional alignment with WRIA boundaries, taxing authority as granted by citizen vote, board members elected locally or appointed by local elected officials, and legal authority to administer implementation.
 - Expanding “obligations” to include any government that voluntarily accepts them, and expanding “rule-making” to include policies, procedures, interlocal agreements and other mechanisms.

Funding

Few Planning Units have yet defined their implementation actions, so efforts to estimate funding needs are provisional at best. The Committee characterized general categories of actions already identified by Planning Units, and reviewed representative costs. Costs depend to a great degree on local needs and circumstances, and much better information will become available as plans are completed. Despite these limitations, the Committee generated one estimate of possible needs amounting to approximately \$5.9 billion.

This figure does not represent a need for specific State funding since many costs may be shared by local, federal and private entities. They are also not “new” needs – many have already been identified through habitat restoration efforts, water and wastewater system plans, irrigation district needs, water quality programs and other processes. Because watershed planning is intentionally comprehensive, all of these costs become additive in the context of a watershed plan.

WATERSHED PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The Committee felt watershed planning offers an improved return on investments in water resource infrastructure projects and programs by defining and reviewing proposed projects and programs from a comprehensive perspective. Planning Units will, it is hoped, package actions together that are naturally complementary and respond to well-defined local priorities.

- ◆ Planning Units should identify potential funding sources as they develop Phase Three plans even though funding arrangements may not be fully defined or finalized until Phase Four implementation. It should be anticipated that requests will be reviewed in the overall context of all water-resource funding needs in their respective WRIsAs.
- ◆ Grants to support coordination and oversight of the implementation process would be extremely valuable in ensuring watershed planning yields successful results. State matching grants of approximately \$2 million per year, over a period of seven to ten years, would support coordination and oversight of plan implementation.
- ◆ The Legislature should authorize a Phase Four implementation grant program providing \$100,000/year for each WRIA (and \$25,000 for each additional WRIA covered by a Planning Unit) for the first three years following plan adoption, with a possible two-year extension of \$50,000/year. All funds would be subject to a 10-25% match.
- ◆ Various agencies, boards and commissions that manage state funding programs should be directed to jointly review how they can support implementation. Ecology should coordinate this review, and provide necessary information on watershed plan implementation to the respective funding entities. State agency staff responsible for providing input on federal funding should undertake a similar review of key federal programs.
- ◆ The Legislature should consider enacting a new revenue program to generate substantial funds for water-related infrastructure projects and watershed management programs, and create a new option in State law for local areas to form Water Resources Districts. These districts could be created at the option of voters in a watershed, and would have taxing authority to raise money for implementation.

Flexibility & Adaptation

Watershed plans will need to be updated or amended as information and scientific understanding improves. In addition, some aspects of implementation have uncertainties due to funding needs, permitting and other factors.

- ◆ Implementation guidelines should include provisions for “day-to-day” management decisions, periodic progress reviews, and occasional updating or revision of the watershed plan.

WATERSHED PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

- ◆ The Legislature should amend the Watershed Planning Act to provide for periodic review of approved plans, and any needed amendments. The review should be carried out by Planning Units, or a similar successor group, as discussed above. Actual amendment decisions should remain at the discretion of the Implementing Governments through a process involving the county legislative authorities. Once approved, the “obligations” voluntarily accepted by implementing organizations should become binding.
- ◆ The Legislature should consider providing funding for periodic updates of watershed plans where there is a demonstrated need identified by Planning Units or successor organizations.

Monitoring & Data Management

Sound information on watershed conditions and trends is vital to management of water quantity, water quality, habitat and instream flows. Some Planning Units may identify monitoring and data management as an important need, others may not.

- ◆ Discussions of monitoring and data management should address the purposes of data collection, the need for sustained efforts to update key data, coordination of monitoring activities, and provisions for data management. For each action, or group of actions, listed in a watershed plan, identify what kind of information will be needed to assess effectiveness and determine when changes may be needed.
- ◆ Information gaps should not be used as an excuse to prevent action. Planning Units or implementing organizations should weigh the need for improved information against the costs associated with pursuing additional information and the risks of delaying water resource and watershed management decisions.
- ◆ Statewide monitoring and information systems should not be limited to activities centered on salmon recovery. Rather, these efforts should address a broad range of water resource information, including demographic growth, land use, water rights and water uses.
- ◆ The State should develop improved monitoring programs to meet statewide needs, including improved coordination among State agencies. These programs should also consider the need for improved monitoring capabilities at the WRIA and subbasin scale. Regional or statewide data centers should be established to store water resource and habitat data, and provide access to this data to watershed managers and the public.
- ◆ The Legislature should consider funding ongoing efforts to improve and update watershed information in areas where Planning Units determine that data limitations preclude effective watershed management actions.

INSTREAM FLOWS

Instream flows are scientifically-based surface water flows set by administrative rule to ensure adequate water for fish and other instream values. Ecology is required to protect flows by adopting regulations and managing water uses that impact flows. Prior to the Watershed Planning Act, Ecology would consult with other resource agencies and affected Tribes during each stage of flow-setting: conducting studies, providing data, making recommendations, and reviewing proposed regulations and draft reports. Under ESHB 1832, this process will now be done at the watershed planning unit table with all water resource interests represented.

- ◆ As of December 2002, Initiating Governments in 29 WRIAs had indicated their intent to coordinate setting of instream flows. Planning Units for 15 of these WRIAs have received the \$100,000 in Ecology grant funds available to prepare flow recommendations. Funding applications are anticipated from most, if not all, of the remaining coordination efforts.
- ◆ Eight WRIAs – Island, Chambers/Clover, Wind/White Salmon, Klickitat, Rock/Glade, Methow, Colville and Pend Oreille – have chosen not to coordinate flow-setting, thereby passing responsibility to Ecology.
- ◆ Flows in three WRIAs – Lower Yakima, Naches and Upper Yakima – are regulated by federal “target flows” administered by the Bureau of Reclamation.
- ◆ Two Planning Units working under Phase One – Palouse and Middle Snake – have until June 2003 and August 2003, respectively, to make this determination.

Flow-Setting Process

The Initiating Governments for each Planning Unit had until the end of 2001, or within one year of initiating Phase One planning to decide whether to establish or amend flows. If they choose to establish flows in watersheds where they have not been set, ESHB 1832 calls for a collaborative effort between Ecology and members of the Planning Unit. Approval of flow recommendations requires the unanimous vote of all government members and tribes invited and accepted on the Planning Unit, and the majority vote of all nongovernmental members. Ecology may then adopt flow-setting rules through either a regular or expedited adoption process, or an adoption process that uses public hearings and notice provided by the county legislative authority.

If Initiating Governments choose to amend existing flows, they can do so only with the unanimous agreement of local governments and tribes on the Planning Unit. Ecology cannot amend existing flows unless they are asked to do so by Initiating Governments and receive the same unanimous approval.

Draft flow regulations will be distributed by the Planning Unit for public comment, often in conjunction with the public review process required for watershed management plan adoption. Ecology is also required to hold public hearings on the proposed regulations, and consult with affected tribes and the departments of Fish & Wildlife, Agriculture, and Community & Economic Development. Based on comments received, Ecology will either adopt the regulation or revise it and, if necessary, repeat the public review process before reconsidering the proposal for adoption.

INSTREAM FLOWS

If the Planning Unit is unable to obtain unanimity, or if approval is not achieved within four years of the Planning Unit first receiving Phase Two funds, Ecology may undertake the adoption of rules setting such flows. The agency would have two additional years to complete the work. For more information, visit: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/sw/inst.html>

In watersheds where no flows are set, and the Planning Unit chooses not to address flows, Ecology may also undertake instream flow rulemaking. In recognition of this responsibility, the agency has developed a *Workplan for Instream Flow-Setting Through 2010*. The report is available at: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/instream-flows/isflowhome.html>

Instream Flow Guidance

A Guide to Instream Flow Setting in Washington State, released in February 2003, is intended for use by watershed planning groups and others developing recommendations for instream flows. Discussed are existing statutory requirements, how to assess flow needs and develop recommendations, and finally the rulemaking process itself. The document is non-prescriptive in nature and is intended as a starting point for groups entering into flow discussions. It will complement the SEPA environmental review template being prepared on the broader issues of watershed planning and management. For more information, visit: http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/instream-flows/isf_guidance.html

FEATURED WATERSHEDS

YAKIMA (WRIA 37/38/39)

On December 18, 2002 the Yakima Basin Watershed Planning Unit became the first in the state to approve a Watershed Management Plan. Twenty-six voting members representing cities, counties, irrigation districts, agriculture, conservation districts, education and the general public were present for the vote. The plan was approved with the full consensus of all Planning Unit members present and has now been forwarded to the three counties (Kittitas, Yakima and Benton) for further public review, consideration and adoption.



While a diversity of interests have been involved in plan development, environmental organizations and the Yakama Nation chose not to participate. The plan expresses a strong desire to have these interests involved in implementation and guidance and support for related efforts, such as salmon recovery.

The plan addresses water quantity, water quality and habitat elements and provides more than 100 specific recommendations and strategies to improve current and future management. State agency representatives involved in the process acknowledged the immense value of the planning effort, and committed to continued cooperation with local governments and water interests. However, it was also recognized that the plan creates no formal obligations for state agencies because local governments elected not to pursue rulemaking or ordinance development at this time. The plan is considered a “road map” which calls upon participants to continue to work together to improve current management. For more information, visit: <http://www.co.yakima.wa.us/tricnty/watershedplan.htm>

FEATURED WATERSHEDS

ENIAT (WRIA 46)

The Entiat Watershed Planning Unit (EWPU) first began to form in December 1993 following enforcement actions and forecasts of Endangered Species Act Listings. The Chelan County Conservation District and Entiat Valley Chamber of Commerce initiated a collaborative effort under the Natural Resource Conservation Service's Coordinated Resource Management Planning process. A CRMP for the Entiat Watershed was completed in July of 2002, and most of the landowners and technical staff involved with that process now serve as the core of the watershed planning effort.



The Planning Unit is able to address four planning elements for the entire Entiat River watershed for several reasons. First, approximately 90 % of the watershed is in public ownership, with agency staff intimately involved in watershed assessment and planning work. Second, the remaining private lands are represented by well-respected citizen leaders who regularly interact with others in the community to assure ongoing support for the watershed effort. Third, the technical, economic, social and political forces in the watershed are simplified by the fact that the watershed falls entirely within one county (Chelan County), watershed boundaries are well-defined by the Cascade Mountain range, and the engagement and commitment of citizens and technical representatives on the Planning Unit.

Scheduled for completion in the fall of 2003, a first draft of the watershed plan has been completed which focuses on the habitat element. It contains habitat protection and restoration recommendations, including installation of instream structures designed to return the lower portion of the river to a more natural fluvial-geomorphic condition. The draft plan also recommends planting riparian vegetation for improved bank stability, to provide cover for fish, and to enhance stream-shading to keep the river water cool. The EWPU anticipates recommending establishment of a water resource management program for the watershed, including instream flow levels for protection and restoration of salmon and implementation of irrigation system efficiency improvements. For more information, visit:

<http://www.co.chelan.wa.us/nr/nr8.htm>

NOOKSACK (WRIA 1)

In the Nooksack watershed, the Lummi Nation and the Nooksack Tribe are Initiating Governments, though neither is a member of the Planning Unit because of government-to-government concerns. As a result, several groups have been formed to assure tribal involvement: the Joint Board consists of representatives from the five Initiating Governments – the Whatcom County Executive, the Mayor of Bellingham, the manager of Whatcom County PUD #1, and the Natural Resources directors for both the Lummi Nation and the Nooksack Tribe. State grant agreements for watershed planning are made with the Joint Board. In addition, there is a Staff Team which consists of staff from each organization and a state and federal agency representative. This staff team is responsible for many of the day-to-day decisions needed to continue moving the Plan towards completion.



On two major issues, instream flows and future governance structures, Joint Board working groups have been developing recommendations for Planning Unit consideration. These groups have not concluded their work, yet there is reason to be optimistic they will develop recommendations the Planning Unit can

FEATURED WATERSHEDS

endorse. Given the complexities of setting instream flows, actual flow recommendations for the entire WRIA are not expected by the planning deadline of October, 2003. The Planning Unit does, however, hope to have an agreement on the process for developing recommendations and supporting technical work completed. Similarly, a future governance structure for achieving better coordination of water resource issues is expected to be a major component of the plan.

Once instream flow recommendations are developed, Ecology staff will need to undertake rulemaking, though there are a number of issues which may require legal action in state and/or federal court. For example, the Lummi Nation has stated their desire to use the watershed planning process to quantify and establish an instream flow right with a time immemorial priority date. There is not currently a mechanism in state law to establish such a date, absent a general adjudication of water rights.

Similarly, it is likely Ecology will be expected to process pending water right applications in the Nooksack once the plan is adopted, requiring a commitment of staff and resources. In addition, there will likely be a need for an ongoing compliance effort, including water rights enforcement as part of a more comprehensive water resources management effort. Such enforcement staff may be water masters who are hired and live in the watershed, but a secure source of funding needs to be identified.

Also, long-term monitoring of environmental conditions will be necessary in order to fill in data gaps in the models being used to guide management decisions, gauge whether the implementation of the plan is having a positive impact on the environment, and design adaptive management techniques to adjust to what is being learned over time. For more information, visit: <http://wria1project.wsu.edu>

DUNGENESS (WRIA 18)

Leaders from the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe, Clallam County, irrigated agriculture, state and federal agencies and others have forged a collaborative approach to solving problems. The Dungeness River Management Team integrates planning for salmon recovery and water resources management, focusing on recommending instream flow levels for water resources regulation, restoring and protecting water quality, salmon habitat and populations, supporting a viable agricultural community, considering habitat concerns in planning for flood hazard management, addressing public water supplies, and responding to ESA listings. Progress on some issues has been significant, especially in water conservation efforts which have won local, state and national awards.



Recurring shortages in late season water supply and competing needs provided an impetus for locally-based problem-solving. Efficiency improvements reduced diversions, leading to improved conditions for salmon during the critical late summer low flows. To protect the water savings realized through infrastructure improvements, the state’s first Trust Water Right agreement was developed in 1998 between Ecology and the Dungeness Water Users Association’s seven irrigation districts and companies.

The Dungeness Water Users are currently piloting the new Comprehensive Irrigation District Management Planning process developed through the Ag/Fish/Water negotiations. One result of this work will be operating agreements with federal fisheries agencies for irrigation-related impacts on listed species; a second will be the irrigators’ compliance with provisions of the Clean Water Act.

FEATURED WATERSHEDS

Numerous efforts are underway to restore river function and habitat for salmon, and to preserve existing salmon stocks. For example, dikes in the floodplain have been identified as impairing both channel function and salmon habitat; these are under review to consider options to reduce risk to life and property while restoring natural river function. An emergency captive brood stock hatchery program has been implemented to maintain the imperiled chinook stock, playing a critical role in providing a “bridge” for the chinook while habitat restoration work occurs. Currently three Dungeness fish stocks are listed under the ESA and others are considered to be in a critical status. The Team tracks harvest and hatchery management issues in addition to its direct involvement in habitat restoration and protection.

Key areas for watershed plan implementation will be continued restoration and protection of salmon habitat, and water supply from sources other than surface water or hydraulically connected ground water. Flows are seasonally limited and the river is fully appropriated. Continuing improvements to the irrigation infrastructure will augment late summer flows in the Dungeness mainstem, as may seasonal water leases. Following up on aquifer and off-channel storage investigations will be important, as storage will likely be needed to augment late season water supplies. Monitoring water quality and water use will be essential in measuring progress in restoring and maintaining watershed health and in evaluating results for adaptive management.

Since the Dungeness watershed is converting from agricultural to suburban uses, providing the County with adequate funds to address non-irrigation related water quality and quantity issues will be critically important in future resource management. For more information, visit http://www.clallam.net/RealEstate/html/land_watershed.htm

NISQUALLY (WRIA 11)

The Nisqually Watershed Planning Unit is scheduled to complete its watershed plan in the fall of 2003. The Nisqually Indian Tribe is the lead agency for the Planning Unit and the Lead Entity for salmon recovery under HB 2496. They are the only tribe in the state to have a dual leadership role. Pierce, Thurston and Lewis counties, as well as the municipalities of Eatonville, Yelm, Lacey and Olympia are participating along with other stakeholder interests.



The Nisqually Planning Unit divided the watershed into sub-basins, and State funding used for the various assessments with the exception of the Upper Nisqually subbasin. Due to an urgent need to address planning for a major regional resort near Ashford, the project proponent was willing to bear the cost of the watershed assessment for the entire subbasin. After it was completed and approved by the Planning Unit, Ecology used the assessment to move forward with processing backlogged water rights for the area. Flexibility shown in the watershed planning process and by Ecology resulted in the resort proponents receiving a water right based on findings that substantiated the availability of water.

Water conservation, siting of wells in proximity to streams, protecting and restoring floodplains and wetlands to store water, constructing and operating reclamation and reuse facilities, estuarine restoration and new municipal wells are some of the topics receiving particular attention in the Nisqually planning process. Specific implementation recommendations for these issues will likely be identified in the final plan. For more information, visit: <http://nisquallyriver.org/planning.html>

WATERSHED STATUS REPORTS

NOOKSACK (WRIA 1)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat, Flows

Plan Due Date: 4th Quarter 2003

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$600,000

Progress Towards Completion:

The Planning Unit made considerable progress under Phase 3 in 2002, including completion of a SEPA checklist, parallel Planning Unit and Joint Board discussions and development of alternatives for governance structure and implementation strategies, a catalog of management options, a list of pilot projects and WRIA-wide programs, first-level screening criteria for management options and pilot projects, and an economic baseline characterization report.

Phase 2 assessments are largely completed. Utah State University is working on the beta version of the computer models for surface and groundwater quantity and quality, and instream flows. They are also developing a Decision Support System (DSS) computer program that will provide a comparison of various management options and integrate the models listed above.

Instream flow results are expected in early 2003 and, at that time, efforts to develop instream flows recommendations will begin. Given their complexity and controversial nature, discussions may extend beyond the June 2003 deadline. In such a case, the plan submitted for approval in June will include a detailed accounting of what has been accomplished, what remains to be done, and a schedule, process and anticipated budget for completion of the task.

Water quality assessments are being developed, or have been completed for surface temperature and other water quality parameters, surface and groundwater nitrogen fate and transport, and lake and loading models for Lake Whatcom. Monitoring to support all surface water quality models is being developed by Utah State University. Lake Whatcom modeling and data collection has been coordinated with Ecology's TMDL work. Copies of assessment work and reports, and their current status, can be obtained from the contact listed below.

Other watershed activities have included a project booth at Northwest Washington Fair, watershed public service announcements at a local theater, a newsletter insert in the Bellingham Herald and other local papers, and two public scoping meetings in July 2002.

Issues related to instream flows and potential tribal water rights continue to pose difficult challenges. As the plan due date nears, the Planning Unit needs now to focus on developing a strategy for plan implementation, including options for funding.

Contact Information:

Linda Sterling
Whatcom County Public Works Department
(360) 676-6876
lsterling@co.whatcom.wa.us

Jim Bucknell
Ecology Watershed Lead
(360) 738-6244
jbuc461@ecy.wa.gov

<http://wria1project.wsu.edu/>

WATERSHED STATUS REPORTS

SAN JUAN (WRIA 2)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat, Flows

Plan Due Date: 4th Quarter 2003

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$441,719

Progress Towards Completion:

A Phase 2 Level 1 assessment has been completed and forwarded to Ecology. It contains planning-level information on groundwater recharge, stream flows, and current and future water use. The availability of water is very site-specific in the San Juan Islands, and generally follows the soils and surficial geology. Geographic areas of concern were identified, including two that will require Level 2 assessments: Lopez Village on Lopez Island, and Orcas Island. The Lopez Village urban growth area assessment will include an in-depth analysis of groundwater aquifers, existing water rights and growth requirements.

San Juan County applied for an instream flow grant in December 2002. A Step A analysis will verify fish presence in two or three top-rated streams and establish flow monitoring in cooperation with the San Juan County Conservation District, the salmon recovery Lead Entity. The Planning Unit is functioning well, having successfully transitioned from prior water quality work to watershed planning and bringing in new, knowledgeable members.

Contact Information:

Mark Tompkins, Environmental Health Manager
San Juan County Dept of Health & Community Services
(360) 378-4474
markt@co.san-juan.wa.us

Rod Sakrison
Ecology Watershed Lead
(425) 649-4447
rsak461@ecy.wa.gov

<http://www.co.san-juan.wa.us/health/wtrshdpln/index.html>

LOWER SKAGIT/SAMISH & UPPER SKAGIT (WRIAs 3 & 4)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Flows

Plan Due Date: 4th Quarter 2003

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$1,075,000

Progress Towards Completion:

Phase 2 Level 1 and Level 2 assessments are complete and have been forwarded to Ecology. The Level 1 assessment includes technical reports on instream flow, groundwater, and water rights and use. The Level 2 assessment addresses instream flow and groundwater, and provides a water rights analysis.

The instream flow report includes an analysis of the interaction between wetlands and stream-flow in the Samish watershed, and identifies flows required by fish. Estimated fish flows exceed normally expected flows, potentially closing off additional out-of-stream diversions. Groundwater studies show inconsistent contribution to the Samish River based on local conditions. The water rights analysis shows only moderate current use and limited future needs. The fisheries technical report has been reviewed, but the Planning Unit has not fully discussed the instream flow analysis or begun a flow negotiation process.

WATERSHED STATUS REPORTS

Significant progress has been difficult in the last year as the Planning Unit has become divided over a number of contentious issues. Several of the caucus groups in the Planning Unit question the value of watershed planning. Skagit County shares the concern that there is little likelihood of additional water being available for allocation from the Samish watershed with the high fisheries flow requirements.

Contact Information:

Kelley Moldstad, Executive Director
Skagit Council of Governments
(360) 416-7875
kelley@scog.net

Rod Sakrison
Ecology Watershed Lead
(425) 649-4447
rsak461@ecy.wa.gov

<http://www.triangleassociates.com/activity/open/index.htm>

ISLAND (WRIA 6)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: None

Plan Due Date: 2nd Quarter 2005

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$419,345

Progress Towards Completion:

The Island County Water Resources Advisory Committee, together with the Department of Ecology completed an Early Action Plan in 2001. The plan contains a snapshot of existing information on water availability, water demand, and streams that are, or may be, important for salmon. The plan also makes recommendations on the processing of water rights while a watershed plan is prepared. Ecology and Island County have worked together to implement the plan.

Phase 2 assessments have been underway since 2001. To date, the advisory committee and Ecology have completed an assessment of paper water rights, and the county has completed and is currently analyzing two seasons of data collection on groundwater water levels and groundwater chemistry, and extensive information on actual water use volunteered by water users. The first steps of Phase 3 began in 2002. Most of the effort to date has focused on the development of work plans for the various aspects of watershed planning (i.e. public involvement, policy evaluation). The advisory committee is also working on a series of topic papers that explore water-related issues and evaluate potential solutions.

Since it began, the Island County planning effort has been challenged with applying the concepts of river-based watershed planning to a groundwater-dependent island setting. Ecology, the county, and the advisory committee, have worked closely to ensure that the intent and requirements of the Watershed Planning Act are met, but are also relevant to the unique water-resource needs of the county.

Contact Information:

Doug Kelly (Phase 2) or Donna Keeler (Phase 3)
Island County Health Department
(360) 679-7350
dougk@co.island.wa.us or donnak@co.island.wa.us

Geoff Tallent
Ecology Watershed Lead
(425) 649-4318
gtal461@ecy.wa.gov

<http://www.islandcounty.net/health/Envh/WRAC/WRAC%20Main.htm>

WATERSHED STATUS REPORTS

SNOHOMISH (WRIA 7)

Planning Phase: Phase 1

Optional Elements Selected: Not yet determined

Plan Due Date: Not yet determined

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$0

Progress Towards Completion:

A Phase 1 grant application has been submitted and approved by Ecology, with the Tulalip Tribes and City of Everett as co-leads. Prior to the award of the Phase 1 grant, the co-leads have agreed that a Memorandum of Agreement among the Initiating Governments that outlines general principles and terms for watershed planning must be completed. As of this writing, all but one of the Initiating Governments has signed the MOA. The final signature is expected in February 2003. Phase 1 organizing will begin soon thereafter.

Contact Information:

Jim Miller
City of Everett
(425) 257-8880
jmill@ci.everett.wa.us

Terry Williams
Tulalip Tribe
(360) 651-4471
twilliams@tulalip.nsn.us

Geoff Tallent
Ecology Watershed Lead
(425) 649-4318
gtal461@ecy.wa.gov

NISQUALLY (WRIA 11)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat, Flows

Plan Due Date: 4th Quarter 2003

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$400,875

Progress Towards Completion:

Phase 2 Level 1 assessment work has been completed and is available in hard copy and CD format at Ecology's web site and the address shown below.

The Nisqually watershed has been divided into subbasins as part of the planning process. Development of the Level 1 assessment for the upper basin above La Grande and Alder Dams was approached in a unique fashion. The Planning Unit received an inquiry from a resort developer who proposed to pay the cost of an assessment for the upper basin. With the Planning Unit's approval, Ecology accepted the proposal. The results confirmed an abundance of water and found that withdrawals for the planned resort would not cause impairment. The water right was approved along with others pending in the subbasin.

Nisqually watershed planning and salmon recovery efforts are being integrated as the planning process proceeds. The Nisqually Tribe is both the Lead Entity under HB 2496, and Lead Agency under HB 2514, the only tribe in the state to hold dual status. This is testament to a very positive working environment involving a range of stakeholder interests in this watershed. The success of this watershed management program has been based on trust and mutual respect among the members of the Nisqually River Council and has resulted in a remarkable record of accomplishment that has carried over to the watershed planning process.

WATERSHED STATUS REPORTS

Contact Information:

George Walter
Nisqually Tribe Natural Resources
(360) 438-8687
gwalter@nwifc.wa.gov

Steve Craig
Ecology Watershed Lead
(360) 407-6784
scra461@ecy.wa.gov

<http://nisquallyriver.org/planning.html>

CHAMBERS/CLOVER (WRIA 12)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat

Plan Due Date: 4th Quarter 2004

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$500,000

Progress Towards Completion:

A Phase 2 Level 1 assessment has been drafted, reviewed and updated. The draft has been submitted to Ecology and is available in from the contact listed below. The Planning Unit is working with project staff and the consultant team on additional refinements, and has started work on Phase 3.

Interest remains high in the planning process and attendance at meetings has been steady. A new organization, the Chambers/Clover Creek Watershed Council, has formed. Though in its early phases, the Council is generally seen as an effective forum for supporting ongoing plan implementation. They can also help implement an existing comprehensive watershed plan developed a few years ago to prevent and correct non-point sources of water pollution.

Contact Information:

Ray Hanowell
Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department
(253) 798-2845
rhanowell@tpchd.org

Bob Duffy
Ecology Watershed Lead
(360) 407-0239
bduf461@ecy.wa.gov

DESCHUTES (WRIA 13)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat, Flows

Plan Due Date: 4th Quarter 2004

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$525,000

Progress Towards Completion:

A Phase 2 Level 1 assessment has been completed and is available in hard copy and electronically through the Thurston County Department of Water and Waste Management.

The Deschutes Planning Unit has undertaken a status inventory of water rights in the watershed to gain a better understanding of the overall water balance. This involved a combination of some field verification and use of aerial photos. The results were mapped on the county's geographic information system (GIS).

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This pilot undertaking demonstrates the value of state-local partnerships in the management of water resource data, and could serve as a useful model to watersheds in other parts of the state. As part of the assessment process, the Planning Unit has also developed a series of “white papers,” including:

- Projecting Future Water Needs for Population Growth
- Water Rights Data
- Instream Flow
- Exempt Wells
- Fresh Water – Water Quality
- Salmon Habitat

These papers have been particularly useful in understanding of the various pieces of the watershed management puzzle. The data and information they contain will be integrated into the final plan.

Contact Information:

Tom Clingman
Thurston County Dept of Water & Waste Management
(360) 357-2491
clingmt@co.thurston.wa.us

Steve Craig
Ecology Watershed Lead
(360) 407-6784
scra461@ecy.wa.gov

<http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/wwm/utilitydev%20pages/wria%5F13.htm>

KENNEDY/GOLDSBOROUGH (WRIA 14)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat, Flows

Plan Due Date: 4th Quarter 2005

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$312,756

Progress Towards Completion:

During 2002 the Planning Unit completed a draft Phase 2 Level 1 assessment which identified and detailed what is known about water issues in the watershed. The assessment also included a water budget based on existing information. A copy is available through Ecology’s web site. A key finding concludes that while much less than 1% of the total amount of available water is actually used, there are still serious availability problems throughout the watershed during the low-flow summer months.

The Planning Unit also initiated Instream Flow work. While flows have already been set in the WRIA, the Initiating Governments are interested in reviewing these settings considering new approaches and information in the areas of fish needs and hydraulic continuity. This effort is in its early stages of reviewing existing information and developing priorities for further technical field work.

Current efforts include applying for supplemental funds for specific water quality efforts and moving forward with both Phase 2 and Phase 3 watershed planning. The focus for 2003 will include identifying and prioritizing data gaps based on the Level 1 assessment, and developing goals, objectives and an outline for the final plan.

The greatest challenge facing the Planning Unit will be revisiting instream flows. The Tribe has stated it is unwilling to agree to any flow changes unless they result in additional water left in the stream.

WATERSHED STATUS REPORTS

Contact Information:

Jason Manassee
Mason County Dept of Community Development
(360) 427-9670 x294
manassj@co.mason.wa.us

Phil Wiatrak
Ecology Watershed Lead
(360) 407-6652
pwia461@ecy.wa.gov

KITSAP (WRIA 15)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat, Storage, Flows

Plan Due Date: 2nd Quarter 2005

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$506,133

Progress Towards Completion:

A Phase 2 Level 1 assessment was completed in 2002 that provides a screening level analysis of paper water rights, estimated and projected water use, water quality issues, and fish and habitat issues in streams. The Planning Unit also completed the first step of an instream flow assessment that provides information on stream flow, instream flow protections, and fish concerns and development pressures for six priority streams. The initial assessment also reviews methods for conducting detailed stream flow assessment. The Planning Unit applied for, and has been awarded supplemental assessment funds for further evaluating stream flows and how they relate to groundwater, the capacity of the natural systems to store water, and ground and surface water quality trends and areas of concern. The Planning Unit is also initiating supplemental assessments of water quality and storage.

Phase 3 planning began in 2002. To date, a working mission and set of goals and objectives have been agreed to. Exploration of the key water-related issues has begun. Finally, a public involvement strategy is under development. The current supplemental assessment funds expire at the end of the biennium. The Planning Unit must complete a large amount of assessment work by June 2003.

The planning effort is challenged with applying the concepts of river-based watershed planning to a groundwater dependent peninsula with numerous small independent streams. The Planning Unit is similarly grappling with how and where to most appropriately direct instream flow assessment efforts given the size and number of streams and limited surface water use. Ecology and the Planning Unit have worked closely to ensure that the intent and requirements of the Watershed Planning Act are met, but are also relevant to the unique water-resource needs of WRIA 15.

Vashon Island is a small and hydrologically independent area within the management area. The Planning Unit is grappling with the degree to which to plan for Vashon Island, and how King County fits into the final approval process.

Contact Information:

Keith Folkerts
Kitsap County
(360) 337-7098
kfolkerts@co.kitsap.wa.us

Geoff Tallent
Ecology Watershed Lead
(425) 649-4318
gtal461@ecy.wa.gov

<http://www.triangleassociates.com/activity/open/index.htm>

WATERSHED STATUS REPORTS

SKOKOMISH/DOSEWALLIPS (WRIA 16)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat, Flows

Plan Due Date: 4th Quarter 2005

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$318,081

Progress Towards Completion:

During 2002 the Planning Unit completed a draft Phase 2 Level 1 assessment which identified and detailed what is known about water issues in the watershed. The assessment also included a water budget based on existing information. A copy is available through Ecology's web site. A key finding concludes that while much less than 1% of the total amount of available water is actually used, there are still serious availability problems throughout the watershed during the low-flow summer months. The Planning Unit also initiated Instream Flow work, including a review of technical studies conducted by Ecology and WDFW in the 1980's.

Current efforts include applying for supplemental funds for specific water quality efforts and moving forward with both Phase 2 and Phase 3 watershed planning. The focus for 2003 will include identifying and prioritizing "data gaps" based on the Level 1 assessment, and developing goals, objectives and an outline for the final plan.

There are two challenges facing the Planning Unit. The geographic area is quite large, ranging from the "great bend" on lower Hood Canal north into Jefferson County. The result is essentially two discrete areas within the WRIA from a political and technical perspective. The other major issue is Cushman Dam. The Skokomish Tribe is challenging the federal relicensing of the project, arguing that the current diversions from the Skokomish River North Fork are impacting salmon protection. Since this matter is in Federal Court, the Planning Unit will not be considering recommendations for that river system.

Contact Information:

Jason Manassee
Mason County Dept of Community Development
(360) 427-9670 x294
manassj@co.mason.wa.us

Phil Wiatrak
Ecology Watershed Lead
(360) 407-6652
pwia461@ecy.wa.gov

QUILCENE/SNOW (WRIA 17)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat, Flows

Plan Due Date: 4th Quarter 2003

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$525,300

Progress Towards Completion:

During 2002 the Planning Unit continued Phase 2 Level 2 assessment work. The Army Corps of Engineers has been retained to conduct detailed surface and groundwater work in the Chimacum basin, and surface water characterizations of the Big and Little Quilcene rivers. A copy of their Level 1 assessment is available through Ecology's web site.

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The Planning Unit also initiated Instream Flow work, hiring a consultant to develop preliminary studies including exceedence curves for the major systems. Other efforts undertaken in 2002 include working with Ecology to install and maintain five gauging stations in critical sub-basins, and initiating work to address the seawater intrusion problem prevalent throughout the coastal areas of the watershed.

A contractor has been hired to draft the final Phase 3 plan. An outline has been produced and the Planning Unit is scheduled to address all the issues throughout the coming year. The focus for 2003 will be finalizing the plan and conducting the technical work associated with setting Instream Flows. The major challenges facing the Planning Unit are agreement on instream flows, agreement on long-term “governance” with respect to implementing the plan, and addressing the seawater intrusion issue.

Contact Information:

Dave Christensen
Jefferson County Environmental Health Dept
(360) 385-9418
dchristensen@co.jefferson.wa.us

Phil Wiatrak
Ecology Watershed Lead
(360) 407-6652
pwia461@ecy.wa.gov

<http://www.olympen.com/jeffpud/puweb/main.htm>

ELWHA/DUNGENESS (WRIA 18)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat, Storage, Flows

Plan Due Date: 4th Quarter 2003

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$800,000

Progress Towards Completion:

Phase 2 assessments are near completion, with a draft available for east WRIA 18 and work in progress for west WRIA 18. When final, the assessments will be submitted to and available from Ecology.

Some of the highlights of major activities in the watershed include:

- Mainstem instream flow recommendations have been reviewed and approved by the Dungeness River Management Team, contingent on resolving the hydraulic continuity and future water availability issues, and forwarded to Ecology.
- The Dungeness River Management Team has formally agreed to participate in the Shared Strategy for Puget Sound Chinook.
- Irrigators, federal fisheries agencies, the Jamestown Tribe, Ecology and others are participating in a pilot Comprehensive Irrigation District Management Plan (CIDMP) for the Dungeness Water Users to gain Endangered Species Act and Clean Water Act compliance.
- A study has nearly been completed by the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation on the relationship between mainstem low flows and side channel water levels. This will be used in the CIDMP discussions of factors limiting to listed salmon.
- The Dungeness River Management Team and members of the Elwha Morse Management Team continue to function as an integral part of the HB 2496 salmon recovery project review and prioritization process for the North Olympic Lead Entity.

WATERSHED STATUS REPORTS

- A major award from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board is funding a multi-year appraisal and buy-out process for landowners along the Rivers End dike, in preparation for restoration of river channel function through eventual dike set-back.
- A groundwater model is under development for analyzing effects of water conservation on the shallow aquifer and surface water.
- A Dungeness Clean Water District has been formally adopted by Clallam County Commissioners. The Clean Water Advisory Team continues to address issues contributing to non-point pollution. A soon-to-be-released study examines the Dungeness Bay circulation patterns in detail.
- The Dungeness river flood hazard reduction plan is being updated, and will integrate habitat restoration concerns as well as public safety.
- Real-time flow monitoring gauges have been installed across the watershed by Ecology's Environmental Assessment Program.

Melding the work of two planning teams, each representing half of the WRIA, into a single plan is a challenge. The planning budget also continues to be a challenge, with county budget cuts and staff cut-backs requiring changes to assignments. In addition, the process for integrating 2514 planning into the County's GMA plan update is not yet well-defined.

Contact Information:

Andy Brastad
Clallam County Long Range Planning
(360) 417-2322
abrastad@co.clallam.wa.us

Cynthia Nelson
Ecology Watershed Lead
(360) 407-0276
cyne461@ecy.wa.gov

http://www.clallam.net/RealEstate/html/land_watershed.htm

LYRE/HOKO & SOLEDUCK/HOH (WRIAs 19 & 20)

Planning Phase: Phase 2

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat, Flows

Plan Due Date: 3rd Quarter 2005

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$334,233

Progress Towards Completion:

After Phase 1 organizing, the process split into two parallel efforts with Planning Units working in each watershed. The US Bureau of Reclamation has agreed to conduct most of the Phase 2 work at no cost to the Planning Unit, though they have been delayed due to urgent assignments in other areas. They anticipate being able to undertake assessment work during 2003. The Planning Units will then need to determine what additional studies will be needed to complete Phase 2.

Low flow monitoring was conducted in fall 2002 in both watersheds, recording some of the lowest flows ever observed in the area. This information that will be very useful in completing water budgets for these WRIAs. Additional studies are anticipated in 2003, with recommendations in following years. The Planning Units have also worked to develop a better understanding of monitoring needs, and have produced a draft monitoring strategy as a cornerstone to a probable request for supplemental funding.

WATERSHED STATUS REPORTS

A significant challenge arose during the past year when the Planning Units lost their coordinator. Until a permanent replacement is hired, Clallam County has assigned staff to both represent the county and help out with administrative details. The Planning Units are optimistic that momentum for planning will resume once a new coordinator is hired.

The North Olympic Peninsula population is fairly low, with much of the area under timber management. Fish stocks are relatively healthy, and there has not been a great deal of water resource monitoring. It has been a challenge to obtain information and maintain the few basic data sources, such as stream gauges, that do exist.

Contact Information:

Pat Crain (WRIA 19) or Val Streeter (WRIA 20)
Clallam County Community Development
(360) 417-2000 x2115
pcrain@co.clallam.wa.us or vstreeter@co.clallam.wa.us

Bob Duffy
Ecology Watershed Lead
(360) 407-0239
bduf461@ecy.wa.gov

LOWER CHEHALIS & UPPER CHEHALIS (WRIAs 22 & 23)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat, Storage, Flows

Plan Due Date: 4th Quarter 2003

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$1,438,351

Progress Towards Completion:

The Planning Unit made considerable progress over the last year toward completion of their watershed plan, which is due in fall 2003. Accomplishments include a Level 1 assessment, collection and evaluation of flow monitoring data where none was previously available, an instream flow study coauthored by Ecology and WDFW, and an outline and goals for the final plan.

The assessment concluded water is over-allocated, at least on paper, and that reliable information on actual water use or the amount of water represented by valid rights, permits or claims is absent. In addition, existing minimum flows established in 1976 are not being met at many locations. As a result, the Planning Unit applied for and received supplemental grant funding to gather instream flow data at 15 regulatory control points established by the 1976 instream flow rule, but never monitored. Although this year was an unusually low water year (flows continued to be quite low through December 2002), this new monitoring data showed that 12 of the 15 sites did not meet established instream flows.

In addition to instream flow work, the Planning Unit is also undertaking development of a basin-wide comprehensive water quality/TMDL effectiveness monitoring plan, and is evaluating multipurpose storage opportunities.

With less than a year to complete the plan, the Planning Unit has a great deal of work before them to prepare a plan that successfully manages water. They have expressed some concern about plan approval process requirements and have communicated this to individual legislators. Maintaining a high-level of commitment and participation to the planning process by the Initiating Governments is an ongoing effort.

WATERSHED STATUS REPORTS

Contact Information:

Lee Napier	Kahle Jennings
Grays Harbor County	Ecology Watershed Lead
(360) 249-4222	(360) 407-6310
lnapier@co.grays-harbor.wa.us	kjen461@ecy.wa.gov

http://www.co.grays-harbor.wa.us/info/pub_svcs/ChehalisBasin/Index.html

GRAYS/ELOCHOMAN & COWLITZ (WRIAs 25 & 26)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat, Flows

Plan Due Date: 3rd Quarter 2004

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$1,020,420

Progress Towards Completion:

A Phase 2 Level 1 assessment and components of a Level 2 assessment have been completed. The Level 1 final report is available at Ecology and the web site below. Significant results and findings include:

- Water supplies and water rights are generally considered adequate for the future.
- Minimal to no growth is projected for most of the areas.
- Primary customers for water use are residential users.
- Farmers are experiencing delays in their ability to relinquish and transfer water rights.
- There have been more concerns expressed about water quality in the area than water quantity.
- Very low flows in late summer and early fall are factors limiting the recovery of salmon. Chinook, Steelhead, chum and bull trout are listed as threatened, and Coho is a candidate for listing in the near future.

The Planning Unit has outlined and prioritized sections to emphasize in their watershed plan. They have also conducted a more detailed assessment of groundwater and analysis of water demand and availability. Streams in both WRIAs have been prioritized for instream flow-setting, and a comparative analysis of stream hydrographs and toe width study results has been completed. The Planning Unit developed alternatives that consider using basin closures, target flows and traditional instream flows, and addressed the practical applicability of the alternatives in the context of water supply planning in the region.

Contact Information:

Melody Tereski, Program Support Manager	(currently vacant)
Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board	Ecology Watershed Lead
(360) 425-1554	
melodyt@lcfrb.gen.wa.us	

<http://www.lcfrb.gen.wa.us/watershed.htm>

WATERSHED STATUS REPORTS

LEWIS & SALMON/WASHOUGAL (WRIAs 27 & 28)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat, Flows

Plan Due Date: 3rd Quarter 2004

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$1,021,810

Progress Towards Completion:

A Phase 2 Level 1 assessment and components of a Level 2 assessment have been completed. The Level 1 final report is available at Ecology and the web site below. Significant results and findings include:

- Most communities, with the exception of Kalama and Woodland, rely on groundwater resources for public drinking water supplies.
- Major public water system managers anticipate significant population growth, with groundwater the most feasible source of new water. The primary issue for these water systems is acquisition of new water rights.
- Water system plans may not address projected growth in water demand in the commercial and industrial sector. Small public water systems are not projected to grow much in the future.
- Water use in the agricultural sector is not well documented. Agriculture water use is likely declining in the region.
- Streams in the two WRIAs are low elevation rain-fed systems with very low late summer and early fall flows.
- Using reclaimed water from municipal and industrial supply is not practical now but may be in the future.
- Low stream flow has been identified as a limiting factor for Salmon throughout the two WRIA area.

The Planning Unit has outlined and prioritized sections to emphasize in their watershed plan. They have also conducted a more detailed assessment of groundwater and analysis of water demand and availability. In addition, they have developed a minimum stream flow strategy with a goal of protecting summer low flows.

Streams in both WRIAs have been prioritized for instream flow-setting, and a comparative analysis of stream hydrographs, flowing modeling and toe width study results has been completed. The Planning Unit developed alternatives that consider using basin closures, target flows and traditional instream flows, and addressed the practical applicability of the alternatives in the context of water supply planning in the region.

Contact Information:

Melody Tereski, Program Support Manager
Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board
(360) 425-1554
melodyt@lcfrb.gen.wa.us

(currently vacant)
Ecology Watershed Lead

<http://www.lcfrb.gen.wa.us/watershed.htm>

WATERSHED STATUS REPORTS

WIND/WHITE SALMON (WRIA 29)

Planning Phase: Phase 2

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat

Plan Due Date: 2nd Quarter 2005

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$250,000

Progress Towards Completion:

The Planning Unit has completed a Phase 2 Level 1 assessment and is scoping Level 2 assessment work. The Level 1 assessment is available at Ecology. Interest remains high in Planning Unit activities, with more than 30 people regularly attending meetings. Significant results and findings include:

- Projected population growth is relatively low, with an expected increase from approximately 13,500 to approximately 19,500 by 2020.
- Irrigated areas with certificates, permits and claims total 13,518 acres, with 76% located in the White Salmon sub-basin.
- Total water allocation claims, permits and certificates for the White Salmon, Rock Creek, Wind River, and Little White Salmon add up to 10% or less of median stream flow.

The Planning Unit developed a detailed instream flow proposal, but ultimately voted to not request a supplemental instream flow grant from Ecology. This was largely due to concerns with having responsibility for developing flow recommendations. Condit Dam on the White Salmon River is proposed to be decommissioned in 2006. If the decision is made to go forward, the Planning Unit will need to determine whether or not to address surrounding issues in their watershed plan.

Contact Information:

Charly Boyd	(currently vacant)
Skamania County	Ecology Watershed Lead
(509) 427-9458	
boyd@co.skamania.wa.us	

KLICKITAT (WRIA 30)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat, Storage

Plan Due Date: 2nd Quarter 2005

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$500,000

Progress Towards Completion:

The Phase 2 Level 1 assessment is nearing completion. It provides a thorough review of available data and information associated with water quantity, quality and habitat. Many data gaps have been encountered that are vital to the development of management strategies during Phase 3. The Planning Unit intends to gather additional information during the Level 2 assessment, as well as supplemental storage and water quality assessments if funding is received from Ecology. The Initiating Governments unanimously elected not to formally engage in the instream flow-setting element. Instream flows will be informally assessed and given consideration as an important component of the other elements.

WATERSHED STATUS REPORTS

Currently, the Planning Unit has a fairly broad representation of different water interests, but lacks strong representation from environmental organizations. The Yakama Nation has voiced concerns about the balance of different interests on the Planning Unit and the level of involvement by local governments, though they continue to participate productively with a high level of interest in fisheries enhancement.

Contact Information:

Dave McClure
Klickitat County
(509) 773-2606
davem@co.klickitat.wa.us

Greg Schuler
Ecology Watershed Lead
(509) 454-3619
grsc461@ecy.wa.gov

ROCK/GLADE (WRIA 31)

Planning Phase: Phase 1

Optional Elements Selected: Not yet determined

Plan Due Date: Not yet determined

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$50,000

Progress Towards Completion:

Phase 1 organizing began in 2002, with representatives of Initiating Governments finalizing a draft operating procedures manual and intergovernmental agreement addressing the scope of work and Planning Unit composition. Staff from Ecology, Benton Conservation District, Benton-Franklin Health District, Benton Rural Electric Association, Eastern Klickitat County Conservation District, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Kennewick Irrigation District and Yakama Nation participated in meetings to develop the planning process. Final approval of the operating procedures manual, and preparations for Phase 2 assessment work, are expected in the near future.

Contact Information:

Dave McClure
Klickitat County
(509) 773-2606
davem@co.klickitat.wa.us

Greg Schuler
Ecology Watershed Lead
(509) 454-3619
grsc461@ecy.wa.gov

WALLA WALLA (WRIA 32)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat, Storage, Flows

Plan Due Date: 3rd Quarter 2005

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$512,362

Progress Towards Completion:

The Phase 2 Level 1 draft assessment has been completed and is available for review at the web site below. Plans for supplemental assessment work on instream flow, water quality and multipurpose storage have been approved, with products from these activities expected late summer of 2003. Phase 3 planning activities began in fall 2002.

WATERSHED STATUS REPORTS

The Planning Unit has established a number of working subcommittees, including water quantity and instream flow, water quality and habitat. Each has Planning Unit representation and is open to anyone who lives or works in the area. There is also a steering committee and a public outreach committee. Members of the public outreach committee have begun working toward two watershed related activities. One provides water quality measurement workshops for local landowners and teachers. The second is a Walla Walla Stream Team to assist streamside property owners in protecting and enhancing urban habitats.

Coordination with other federal, state and local planning and implementation efforts affecting water and/or fish continues to be a challenge. These include:

- Northwest Power Planning Council sub-basin planning
- Managing development in the Walla Walla urban area (aquifer storage and recovery project, the local stream team pledge program)
- Sustaining agricultural production (comprehensive irrigation district management planning, water metering mandate, WDFW screening project and Conservation District irrigation efficiency program)
- Protecting Endangered fish species (habitat conservation planning)
- Coordinating with Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation for protection of usual and accustomed hunting and fishing rights
- US Army Corps of Engineers feasibility study for flow augmentation
- Setting instream flows in tributaries to the Touchet and on sections of the Walla Walla
- Water acquisition programs
- Coordinating with Oregon water interests and governments (Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council, Oregon Irrigation districts, Umatilla County)
- Improving water quality on the Walla Walla, Mill Creek and Touchet (TMDL underway)
- Ongoing restoration of riparian habitat (continuation of SRF board and HB 2496 projects)
- Meeting future demands for domestic supply in the smaller cities in the watershed

Contact Information:

Cathy LaRoque
Walla Walla County
(509) 527-3285
claroque@co.walla-walla.wa.us

Viki Leuba
Ecology Watershed Lead
(509) 329-3578
vleu461@ecy.wa.gov

<http://www.co.walla-walla.wa.us/Departments/planning/Watershed/plunit.htm>

PALOUSE (WRIA 34)

Planning Phase: Phase 1

Optional Elements Selected: Not yet determined

Plan Due Date: Not yet determined

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$50,000

WATERSHED STATUS REPORTS

Progress Towards Completion:

The first meetings of Initiating Governments were held in the summer of 2002, with the first Planning Unit meeting in November 2002. Major issues for the watershed include instream flows in the Palouse River and tributaries, water quality concerns and TMDLs, water for development along the Moscow-Pullman corridor, and coordination with Idaho.

Contact Information:

Rob Buchert	Doug Allen
Palouse Conservation District	Ecology Watershed Lead
(509) 332-4101	(509) 329-3600
pcd@completebbs.com	doua416@ecy.wa.gov

MIDDLE SNAKE (WRIA 35)

Planning Phase: Phase 1

Optional Elements Selected: Not yet determined

Plan Due Date: Not yet determined

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$50,000

Progress Towards Completion:

A steering committee began preliminary work in the fall of 2002. The committee, with representatives from each Initiating Government, Ecology and Asotin Conservation District, authorized Asotin Public Utility District to contract with Economic and Engineering Services, Inc. to develop an interlocal agreement among the Initiating Governments, and a scope of work for Phase 2. With assistance from the consultant, the committee will recruit Planning Unit members to establish operating procedures and determine, in consultation with the steering committee, the scope of planning activities.

Investigation of instream flow-setting began on the Tucannon River before the Initiating Governments agreed to undertake watershed planning. The Tucannon River working group and the steering committee for instream flow-setting will be invited and encouraged to participate in watershed planning efforts.

Challenges in this watershed include managing development in the Lewiston-Clarkston urban area, sustaining agricultural production, protecting endangered fish species, coordinating with the Nez Perce Tribe for protection of usual and accustomed hunting and fishing rights, investigating and possibly setting flows in tributaries to the Snake River, and coordinating with Idaho water interests and governments.

Contact Information:

Tim Simpson	Viki Leuba
Asotin Public Utilities District	Ecology Watershed Lead
(509) 758-1010	(509) 329-3578
tsimpson@asotinpub.org	vleu461@ecy.wa.gov

WATERSHED STATUS REPORTS

LOWER YAKIMA, NACHES & UPPER YAKIMA (WRIAs 37-39)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat, Storage

Plan Due Date: Completed 4th Quarter 2002

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$1,810,000

Progress Towards Completion:

On December 18, 2002, the Yakima Basin Plan became the first in the State to be approved by a Planning Unit and forwarded for additional public consideration and adoption by the Counties. The Plan addresses water quantity, water quality and habitat, and provides multiple recommendations and strategies to improve water resources management.

Moving forward into implementation of strategies and actions contained in the plan hinges on continued and improved cooperation and coordination by local, state and federal governments and other entities. While state level rule-making and ordinance development are given consideration in the plan they are not formally assigned as an obligation to state or local governments.

Although a diversity of interests participated in plan development, environmental organizations and the Yakama Nation chose not to participate. However, the Plan expresses a strong desire to have these interests involved in implementation efforts and use of appropriate parts of the watershed plan to help guide and support other related activities, such as salmon recovery. One of the critical factors to enable successful implementation remains availability of necessary funding and resources.

Contact Information:

Jim Milton, Executive Director
Tri-County Water Resource Agency
(509) 574-2650
tricitywater@co.yakima.wa.us

Greg Schuler
Ecology Watershed Lead
(509) 454-3619
grsc461@ecy.wa.gov

<http://www.co.yakima.wa.us/tricity/watershedplan.htm>

UPPER CRAB/WILSON (WRIA 43)

Planning Phase: Phase 2

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat, Flows

Plan Due Date: 3rd Quarter 2006

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$141,462

Progress Towards Completion:

The Planning Unit began work in the fall of 2000. Work on a Phase 2 assessment is just now commencing, with the final watershed plan due in December 2006. In January 2003 they signed contracts with Kennedy/Jenks to undertake the water quantity and water quality elements, and with Brown and Caldwell for the instream flows and habitat elements. The Planning Unit is also planning to apply for a supplemental grant to study water storage issues.

WATERSHED STATUS REPORTS

Major issues include instream flow in Crab Creek and its tributaries, private property rights protection, Odessa sub-area and groundwater supply limitations, water for agriculture, water for growing communities, and trout habitat. Although many reaches of Crab Creek and its tributaries go dry during low flow periods, several reaches sustain flow year-round. These perennial, groundwater-fed reaches sustain surprisingly vigorous trout fisheries.

Contact Information:

David Lundgren
Lincoln County Conservation District
(509) 725-4181 x3
david-lundgren@wa.nacdn.net

Doug Allen
Ecology Watershed Lead
(509) 329-3600
doua461@ecy.wa.gov

MOSES COULEE & FOSTER (WRIAs 44 & 50)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat, Flows

Plan Due Date: 3rd Quarter 2004

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$602,981

Progress Towards Completion:

The Planning Unit completed Phase 1 after developing a scope of work for watershed assessment. In September, 2000, they began working on the Phase 2 assessment and hired consultants to collect data and produce the assessment report. The consultants released a draft Phase 2 assessment in December 2001. The final assessment was approved by the Planning Unit in January 2003, and is available from the web site below. Phase 3 plan development is now underway.

The Planning Unit also received grant funding for an instream flow assessment. They have completed a scope of work, and are collecting flow data as part of general assessment work that can be used to set instream flows. As most streams in the planning area are naturally intermittent, their intent is to establish instream flows on the lower sections of Foster Creek and Rock Island Creek.

The lead agency for watershed planning, Foster Creek Conservation District, is also lead entity for salmon recovery activities in the county. The Planning Unit members work well together and have been able to resolve issues as they arise.

Contact Information:

Marilynn Lynn, Watershed Manager
Foster Creek Conservation District
(509) 686-3501
marilynn-lynn@wa.nacdn.net

John Storman
Ecology Watershed Lead
(509) 997-1363
jsto461@ecy.wa.gov

<http://www.pgwg.com/dougco.htm>

WATERSHED STATUS REPORTS

WENATCHEE (WRIA 45)

Planning Phase: Phase 2

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat, Flows

Plan Due Date: 2nd Quarter 2006

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$235,333

Progress Towards Completion:

The Planning Unit is early in the assessment phase, with Montgomery Water Group due to complete a Level 1 water resources assessment by the summer of 2003. Ongoing water quality assessments and planning are being conducted by the Chelan County Conservation District and Ecology as part of a watershed-wide TMDL plan. The Planning Unit adopted the TMDL effort as its water quality assessment. A number of recent water quality focus sheets and assessment products are available through Ecology's web site. Meeting minutes and additional assessment information, including an executive summary of the factors limiting salmon recovery in the watershed, are available at the web site below.

Recognizing the importance of instream flows, the Planning Unit set aside \$ 87,000 of general assessment funds to use as match for a salmon recovery grant to conduct an instream flow assessment. The grant was denied, and the Planning Unit has been unable to find an alternative source of funds. They are currently investigating other approaches to instream flow assessment work.

Chelan County also received \$250,000 from Ecology to study the feasibility of water storage on Lake Wenatchee. A project team consisting of land owners, state and federal agencies, local governments, irrigation districts, conservation organizations, tribes, private consultants and others has been assembled. The team has created a detailed scope of work which consists of potential water storage capacity of the lake, flood control benefits, dam construction issues, short- and long-term impacts to lakefront property owners, direct and indirect impacts to fish, and other environmental concerns, including impacts to wetlands, White and Little Wenatchee River ecosystems, and wildlife. The study is due to be completed by June 2003.

Multiple natural resource planning processes currently underway with different schedules, formats, and regulatory drivers that require the involvement of many of the same stakeholders may impair full engagement in any one process. This has resulted in the need to coordinate these processes to avoid duplication of effort, and to facilitate the exchange of information. The potential for a lawsuit under ESA around instream flows in Peshastin Creek has Planning Unit members concerned about the validity of decisions made in the watershed planning process. Limits to the amount of funding provided under RCW 90.82, and the uncertainty of future funding, raise concerns about the prospects for implementation of the final watershed plan.

Contact Information:

Mike Kaputa
Chelan County Natural Resources Program
(509) 667-6584
mike.kaputa@co.chelan.wa.us

John Monahan
Ecology Watershed Lead
(509) 457-7112
jmon461@ecy.wa.gov

<http://www.co.chelan.wa.us/nr/nr3.htm>

WATERSHED STATUS REPORTS

ENTIAI (WRIA 46)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat, Flows

Plan Due Date: 4th Quarter 2003

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$339,102

Progress Towards Completion:

The Planning Unit released a combined final draft Coordinated Natural Resource Management Plan and first review draft Watershed Plan in August 2002. It can be downloaded from the web site below, and is available in CD format from the Chelan County Conservation District. Additional instream flow, habitat, water quality-temperature, and water quantity analyses will be incorporated in the final plan between January and October, 2003. The Entiat Watershed Planning Unit was recognized by the US Department of Agriculture with a 2002 "Spirit Award" for its collaborative efforts in both planning and implementing projects in the watershed.

The consultant, ENTRIX, completed field work on instream flows in October 2002. In November, the Water Quantity subcommittee met to determine alternative approaches to incorporating instream flow needs in the overall water budget. Professionally facilitated instream flow and water quantity/water budget workshops and work sessions are scheduled throughout 2003. Final instream flow recommendations and a water budget are on schedule for completion by October 2003.

The Entiat Watershed Planning Unit has requested no supplemental funds for the optional instream flow, habitat or storage elements. However, salmon recovery funding is being used to complete instream flow and habitat assessments scheduled for completion in early 2003. Supplemental funding has also been received to support the incorporation of water quality assessment elements into the Entiat Geographic Information System, which has been especially instrumental in both outreach and plan development activities.

As the plan nears completion, the uncertainty of funding for implementation, given state and federal budget constraints, remains a concern. Investments will be needed to design habitat and irrigation system improvement projects, and implement significant portions of the plan. The Planning Unit lacks the engineering design expertise to fully design these projects in a manner acceptable to permitting agencies.

Contact Information:

Phil Jones
Chelan County Conservation District
(509) 664-0270
phil-jones@wa.nacdn.net.org

John Monahan
Ecology Watershed Lead
(509) 457-7112
jmon461@ecy.wa.gov

<http://www.co.chelan.wa.us/nr/nr8.htm>

WATERSHED STATUS REPORTS

METHOW (WRIA 48)

Planning Phase: Phase 2

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat

Plan Due Date: 4th Quarter 2003

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$749,999

Progress Towards Completion:

The Planning Unit continues to move forward with studies designed to characterize and model groundwater, surface water and the interaction of the two. A final Phase 2 Level 1 assessment, accepted by the Planning Unit in July 2002, includes requirements for the water quantity element. Golder Associates and the USGS are calibrating and collecting data from twenty-three stream gauges, modeling groundwater and surface water in the watershed, and conducting a sub-basin specific detailed groundwater study. Information gathered during these efforts is available at: http://methow_planning_unit.golder.com.

In 2000, the state legislature provided additional funding for the Planning Unit to establish a baseline hydrologic assessment, including a groundwater study and model, development of a USGS watershed model, and completion of a water quantity assessment. The lead agency, Okanogan County, has provided limited funding for continuing support and administration of planning efforts. The Planning Unit has applied for Phase 3 grant funding for plan development.

In addition to the Level 1 assessment, the Planning Unit completed a watershed planning work plan, an assessment of limiting factors for salmon recovery, and a Lower Chewuch River Snorkel Survey. The Planning Unit has decided not to examine instream flows, concluding that flows established in 1976 should not be modified. A water storage assessment which compiles previous studies and provides a new analysis using a USGS basin model is also being developed by the Planning Unit. The listing of salmon under the Endangered Species Act, and related regulatory actions, remain a challenge to watershed planning.

Contact Information:

Julie Dagnon, Water Resources Manager
Okanogan County Water Resources
(509) 422-7370
jdagnon@co.okanogan.wa.us

John Stormon
Ecology Watershed Lead
(509) 997-1363
jsto461@ecy.wa.gov

http://methow_planning_unit.golder.com

OKANOGAN (WRIA 49)

Planning Phase: Phase 1

Optional Elements Selected: Not yet determined

Plan Due Date: Not yet determined

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$0

WATERSHED STATUS REPORTS

Progress Towards Completion:

The process for moving forward with formal watershed planning is currently being defined by the Initiating Governments. A Phase 1 proposal and grant agreement are currently being reviewed by Ecology. The Initiating Governments are Okanogan County, Colville Confederated Tribes, City of Omak and Oroville-Tonasket Irrigation District.

Contact Information:

Julie Dagnon, Water Resources Manager
Okanogan County Water Resources
(509) 422-7370
jdagnon@co.okanogan.wa.us

John Stormon
Ecology Watershed Lead
(509) 997-1363
jsto461@ecy.wa.gov

<http://www.okanogancounty.org/Water/Okanogan%20Basin.htm>

LITTLE & MIDDLE SPOKANE (WRIAs 55 & 57)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat, Flows

Plan Due Date: 1st Quarter 2004

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$879,265

Progress Towards Completion:

The Planning Unit began work in the fall of 1998. An executive summary of the Level 1 assessment is available at the web site listed below. The complete assessment will be posted in the next few months. Phase 3 planning started in July 2002, with the final watershed plan due in December 2003. An instream flow assessment was initiated on the Little Spokane River in summer 2002, and should be completed by spring 2003. An instream flow assessment for the Middle Spokane is still being considered. The Planning Unit is also considering whether to apply for a storage supplemental grant given time constraints.

Major issues include water supply to meet a growing population over the Spokane Valley-Rathdrum Prairie sole source aquifer, flows in Spokane River, and coordination with Idaho water interests and governments. The Planning Unit is also working to coordinate instream flow assessment efforts with FERC relicensing for Avista Utilities' five hydropower projects on the Spokane River. Flows during the summer are regulated by Post Falls Dam, which provides for recreational uses on Lake Coeur d'Alene. Maintaining lake levels for recreation has negative consequences for downstream flows.

Contact Information:

Stan Miller
Spokane County Public Works
(509) 725-4467
smiller@spokanecounty.org

Doug Allen
Ecology Watershed Lead
(509) 329-3600
doua461@ecy.wa.gov

<http://www.spokanewatershed.org>

WATERSHED STATUS REPORTS

HANGMAN (WRIA 56)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat, Flows

Plan Due Date: 4th Quarter 2004

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$353,500

Progress Towards Completion:

The Planning Unit began work in the fall of 1999. A Phase 2 draft assessment is nearly complete. Some Phase 3 planning activities began in fall 2002, and the final plan is due fall 2004. An instream flow assessment was initiated spring 2002, with field work complete and data analysis underway. A water quality supplemental grant began in summer 2002, and a storage supplemental grant application is being considered. All optional elements will be incorporated into the Level 1 assessment, a major component of which will describe the aquifers and their relationship with Hangman Creek and its tributaries. The Planning Unit is also trying to evaluate the genetics and distribution of red-band trout in the watershed.

Major issues include instream flows in Hangman Creek, future demand for domestic supply in lower Hangman Valley, and water quality issues related to suspended sediment. Suspended sediment concentrations are high during winter runoff events, and are exacerbated by certain cultivation practices, streambank erosion, frozen topsoil conditions, and rain on snow.

Contact Information:

Walt Edelen
Spokane County Conservation District
(509) 535-7274
walt-edelen@sccd.org

Doug Allen
Ecology Watershed Lead
(509) 329-3600
doua461@ecy.wa.gov

<http://www.sccd.org/2514.htm>

COLVILLE (WRIA 59)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Storage

Plan Due Date: 4th Quarter 2004

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$600,000

Progress Towards Completion:

The Planning Unit is nearing completion of Phase 2, and Phase 3 is underway. USGS is providing the first draft of the Phase 2 water quantity assessment by the end of 2002. The Planning Unit also received a water storage supplemental grant in the fall of 2002 to explore on/off-stream storage options.

Completion of the plan is scheduled for the fall of 2004. The Planning Unit does much of its work through several standing subcommittees, including administration, plan development, water quantity, water quality, and instream flow. A technical writer will be hired early in 2003 to help write the plan.

The Planning Unit successfully lobbied for a county water conservancy board, established in summer 2002, to process water right changes and transfer applications. They have also worked hard to develop

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innovative ways to augment instream flow. A pilot project in a closed sub-basin would temporarily open the tributary during spring high flows to heavy irrigation in the uplands, and monitor groundwater recharge and any subsequent summer low flow stream recharge. Bacteria source tracking is another project being developed on high-load tributaries which impact the mainstem.

Challenges for the group continue to center around the desire to open the Colville Basin to further appropriation. Among the greatest needs are municipal water for community growth, and irrigation water in a watershed closed since 1977. The Planning Unit will be utilizing the storage grant to help shed light on storage, aquifer recharge and other instream flow enhancement opportunities. In addition, an ongoing fecal coliform TMDL in the watershed has highlighted land management decisions and aging septic/sewage treatment systems, and the impact they have on water quality.

Contact Information:

Linda Kiefer
Stevens County Conservation District
(509) 685-0936 x112
lkiefer@co.stevens.wa.us

Mimi Wainwright
Ecology Watershed Lead
(509) 329-3419
mwai461@ecy.wa.gov

http://homepage.plix.com/sccd/colville_river_watershed_planning.htm

KETTLE (WRIA 60)

Planning Phase: Phase 2

Optional Elements Selected: Flows

Plan Due Date: 2nd Quarter 2006

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$172,500

Progress Towards Completion:

The Planning Unit completed Phase I and entered Phase 2 in spring 2002. In addition to a Phase 2 grant, they received an instream flow supplemental grant in 2002. The Planning Unit has contracted with Foster Wheeler, who along with GEO Engineers will provide a Phase 2 water quantity assessment and work on instream flows. Completion of the watershed plan is scheduled for spring 2006.

Challenges facing the watershed include planning for future water appropriations under an already limited flow regime, coordination with British Columbia when the greatest portion of the watershed lies in Canada, and threatened and endangered species listings and habitat designations. Specific issues include Planning Unit concern with the Canadian government over a run-of-the-river hydroelectric project, and bull trout habitat designations.

Contact Information:

Joy Osterberg
Ferry County
(509) 775-5229
joy@co.ferry.wa.us

Mimi Wainwright
Ecology Watershed Lead
(509) 329-3419
mwai461@ecy.wa.gov

<http://www.okanogancounty.org/Water/Kettle%20Basin.htm>

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PEND OREILLE (WRIA 62)

Planning Phase: Phase 3

Optional Elements Selected: Quality, Habitat

Plan Due Date: 3rd Quarter 2004

Funds Awarded Through December 2002: \$497,706

Progress Towards Completion:

A Phase 2 Level 1 water quantity assessment was completed by Entrix in the Fall of 2001, and is available at Ecology's Eastern Regional Office. Recently the Planning Unit retained the services of Golder & Associates to complete a Level 2 assessment and final Phase 3 plan, due summer 2004. The group operates with the assistance of standing subcommittees including steering, water quantity, water quality, habitat and public relations.

Plans to remove Cedar Creek Dam in the town of Ione, which uses a small reservoir on Cedar Creek as a secondary municipal water supply, brought to light differences in fisheries management. The dam is under an Ecology Order to correct safety problems, and the cost of repair and maintenance resulted in a huge economic burden for the community. WDFW suggested applying for salmon recovery funds to remove the dam and help restore bull trout habitat. Unfortunately, the dam also separated native Westslope cutthroat trout from non-native rainbow trout. Much work has been done between state, federal and tribal fish managers and Planning Unit members to help resolve this particular barrier issue and in turn, establish a process for removal of barriers and the management of potential fish introgression.

Other challenges in the watershed include coordination with an active salmon recovery group and Limiting Factors Analysis, habitat designations for threatened and endangered species (primarily bull trout), and fish barrier management and removal.

Contact Information:

Don Comins
Pend Oreille Conservation District
(509) 447-4217
don@pocd.org

Mimi Wainwright
Ecology Watershed Lead
(509) 329-3419
mwai461@ecy.wa.gov

<http://www.pocd.org/wria.html>